

COUNTY OF YORK

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 20, 2005 (BOS Mtg. 2/1/05)

TO: York County Board of Supervisors

FROM: James O. McReynolds, County Administrator

SUBJECT: Authorization of Grant Application - Yorktown Trolley

Issue

Consider authorizing the submission of a grant application to request funding assistance to purchase a second rubber-tired trolley bus for visitor transportation in Yorktown.

Considerations

Since 1992, as part of its Yorktown enhancement efforts, the County has been providing trolley service for visitors in Yorktown. During the first seven (7) years of this program, service was provided on weekends and for special events by contracting with the Peninsula Transportation District Commission (PTDC, now HRT) for the operation of one of its trolley buses. In 1999, the County purchased and put into operation the Yorktown Trolley, with funding for the \$269,000 vehicle coming from a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant and Secondary Roads funds. Annual operating costs (approximately \$20,000) are funded from the tourism-designated lodging tax revenues. Since it began operation in 1999, ridership on the trolley has increased steadily and in 2004 the trolley carried 16,969 passengers. With the opening of Riverwalk Landing, and the 2006 and 2007 commemorations on the horizon, it is expected that the demand for trolley services in Yorktown will continue to increase.

As ridership grows and the number of attractions (and trolley stops) increases, the ability to provide service with desirable frequency will become more difficult. That, coupled with the increased age and mileage on the existing bus, has caused staff to investigate opportunities for acquiring a second vehicle. Through contacts with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, it has been determined that, with Board approval, the County is eligible to apply for grant funding that could provide as much as 96% of the cost of a new vehicle of the same type and design currently in use. At that level of funding assistance for a \$287,000 vehicle (current cost estimate for a vehicle identical to the Yorktown Trolley), the County would be responsible for a local match of \$11,480. Sufficient funds are available in the Shared Roads Construction (Revenue Sharing Program) CIP account to cover this match requirement and annual operating costs (assuming a successful grant application) could be funded from an increased allocation of tourism-designated lodging tax revenues.

Recommendation

Trolley service has proven itself to be a beneficial part of the Yorktown visitors' experience and, for some, one of the actual attractions in the village. Increasing ridership and an increase in the number of attractions are straining the capacity of the existing single-bus system. A second vehicle would provide the opportunity to better respond to times of peak visitation and would provide back-up service in the event of mechanical problems. Competitive grant opportunities available through the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation could assist the County in acquiring a second vehicle with a minimal local match requirement (4%, or \$11,480).

I recommend that the Board authorize the submission of a grant application to seek funding assistance in the amount of \$275,520, to be matched with a local contribution of \$11,480, to secure a second Yorktown Trolley bus. This can be accomplished through adoption of proposed Resolution R05-15.

Carter/3337:jmc

Attachment: Proposed Resolution R05-15